Chapter 2 *Action Planning*

Module 2: Community Review

Step Up and Step Out to conduct a Community Review!

The goal of **Step Up and Step Out** is to make it easier for children to choose healthy eating and physical activity. To accomplish this, a good look at the community and school is necessary to determine which factors influence those choices.

A review of your community will help you identify:

1. Strengths: Existing factors that positively influence healthy choices
2. Opportunities for development: Actions you can take to increase healthy eating and activity choices
3. Starting points by which to determine progress
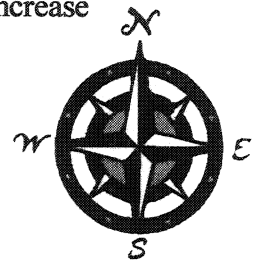
A review is your compass for making changes. It gives you information about events, programs, facilities, people and other resources in your community.

Different communities—different strengths!

The review supplements community information gathered in the listening sessions. The word "review" is used rather than "assessment" or "evaluation." This is an important point—some words create negative feelings, and the review should be very positive!

Focus on strengths as well as areas for development. Building on existing resources saves time and energy. Regardless of the focus, the *little* steps to success will result in big wins!

Examples:

Example 1: During their review, a community determines the concession stands at community events do not offer healthy alternatives to candy and soft drinks. They earmark concession stands as an opportunity for development.

Example 2: Another community's review identifies a very popular, privately owned gymnastics facility as a good outlet for physical activity. The coalition feels that if gymnastics is so popular, they might be able to increase opportunities for more children to participate. Rather than planning to add gymnastics to an already over-crowded city recreation building, they indicate on their review that they might pursue a partnership with the owner of the gymnastics facility to increase opportunities.

Get ready for the review

Gather as many coalition members as you can to review your community and school(s) for factors that influence healthy choices.

It is important for the *whole* group to recognize and discuss the factors that could be used to increase opportunities for healthy eating and activity choices. Keep in mind the review is the *compass* from which future direction is determined.

The review also provides a wonderful and exciting opportunity to gain support for your initiative.

Now is the time to actively recruit individuals and groups to share goals as well as discuss opposing viewpoints openly and respectfully. The review process will strengthen their resolve and commitment for making the initiative a success, months and years after your first meeting!
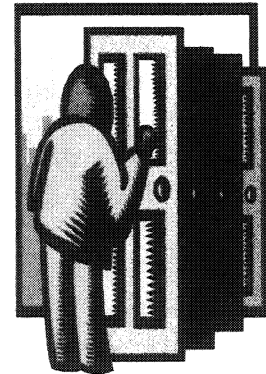
Factors in all components influence healthy choices

The review will help to identify existing opportunities and choices for healthy eating and activity by using factors in each of the four components to help ensure that everywhere kids live, learn, and play are considered in creating the best opportunities possible.

The components

♥ **Community**
Think about all the places in your community kids go each day. You'll find there are probably not many places they *don't* go! How many opportunities do kids have for making healthy choices at each of the places you picture? Your community sets the stage for healthy choices. Take a look at opportunities for healthy changes in your community. Create goals and plans...and then take action to open up new healthy possibilities!

♥ **Nutrition Education**
Being able to tell one nutrient from the next is good but it won't mean that kids will eat healthy! They need a good attitude and skills to make healthy choices. Fun, participatory nutrition activities that incorporate the principles of variety, proportion, balance, fat and healthy choices *will* make a difference! Integrating these lessons throughout the curriculum can be easy and fun.

♥ **Physical Education**
Our world has made it easier for us all to be inactive. Kids need more opportunities for physical activity.
Opportunities can be created throughout the school day as well as in the community. A non-competitive environment means that no one gets left out!
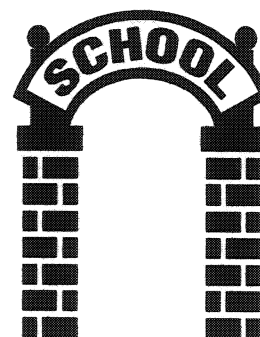
♥ **School Meals**
Pair fun, color, and excitement with quality, healthy school meals and students can't *wait* to eat at school! Simple marketing plans can increase student participation and ensure healthy eating choices!

The factors to identify in each of the components
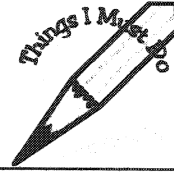
Events

Do events...an annual fall festival, parent nights at school, or music concerts...currently exist that include healthy eating and/or activity choices, or is that an area for development? Could more opportunities for healthy choices be created at these events?

Identify:
- ♥ Events
- ♥ Programs
- ♥ Facilities
- ♥ Policies
- ♥ People

Example:

A community might plan an action-packed "sing along" at one of their music concerts. The audience can participate by clapping, bending, and moving in time to the music!

Programs

Could programs...i.e., city recreation classes, senior citizen's classes, or latch key programs...be opportunities for increasing opportunities for healthy choices? In your initiative, all areas of the community influence a child's choices, including senior citizens!

Example:

A Girl Scout Troop earned a badge in healthy eating, and as a result, healthy eating choices were included at all meetings!

Facilities

Are facilities that influence opportunities...city recreation departments, school gyms, or school cafeterias...adequate or used to their full potential?

Example:

What do you already have in your community that could be used in a different way to further your mission? Is there a walking path that would be used by

more people if it were lighted? Is there a swimming pool or tennis court at the high school that is not currently available for the community after hours?

Policies

How do policies affect choices? Does your school have a policy that allows the sale of foods that are competitive with school meals? Is there a policy that gives guidelines for vending machines or party foods in the classroom? Are there policies that influence physical activity or healthy eating...i.e., physical activity integrated in the classroom, or a health curriculum that includes healthy eating for each grade?

Example:

A school might develop a policy to keep classroom pizza parties from competing with school meals, by having the school food service personnel plan a pizza party that can be a counted as a school meal. School food service personnel can still plan so that the party can be held in the classroom.

People

Who are the role models in your community? It is difficult to see long-term changes in the environment unless there are individuals and groups who will model the proposed changes. Some role models will be in the "public eye"... i.e. the town mayor, police chief, coaches, television/radio personalities, teachers, and business leaders...more often than others will. These role models may have a more wide spread impact, but anyone and *everyone* will be a role model. Remember however, there is no more important role model than a parent when it comes to a child's health habits. Parents need to be involved whenever possible.

Example:

Coaches in one school became role models for healthy eating by promoting and eating "wellness table" lunches. As a result, more children chose to eat a healthy lunch.

Later application of information

All of the information gathered at this point will be used to plan specific actions. Beginning action planning before all the information is assembled can result in duplication of efforts and in some cases, competition with things that already exist in the community.

Take the time to gather and review information!

Example:

One community coalition initiated a touch football program only to discover later they were competing with an existing soccer program for players and parents who could be coaches and referees!

A review identifies a community starting point to measure the progress of actions taken.

Identify a starting point to:

- ♥ Determine which actions are successful or whether they need to be adjusted.
- ♥ Motivate change by:
  1. Building in a way to recognize and celebrate success. Recognizing progress is one of the *best* motivators you can find to sustain the initiative!
  2. Providing a continuous focus on changes in the environment of the community. The coalition has no control over changes in personal choices and they may happen slowly. The coalition will stay motivated by measuring the environmental factors over which they have control.

Example:

The coalition can't make a child choose a healthy school meal, but it can help to make a healthy choice more likely. The coalition can help to identify the healthy items kids will choose, build skills for making healthy choices, and create a pleasant eating environment with a reasonable amount of time in which to eat. Success with each one of those actions is a reason to celebrate.

Complete the Community Review

When?

The coalition can conduct the initial community review at the same time the listening sessions are being held. Ideally, the initial review will be completed within a few months of the conclusion of the listening sessions. Information from the review will need to be developed and maintained by the coalition to create an action plan and a measure for success.

Later, when the coalition is determining actions and timelines, they will want to determine how often the review should be repeated to measure progress. A follow-up review is suggested every three months for the first year.

Who?

Include as many interested people as possible including:
- The "core" coalition organizers
- The initiative coordinator
- Potential initiative partners including: school administrators, teachers, school food service staff, business owners, manufacturers, freelance specialists, and government agencies

How?

A community review tool is provided on the following pages. It is designed to answer the questions... "Where are we now?" and "Where are we going?"...by providing a list of factors that are common to most communities. A summary of benefits and the procedure for using the review tool follow.

Why?

1. Help determine what programs, policies, and projects are effective
2. Provide feedback on a regular basis
3. Help motivate change
4. Provide focus on changes in the environment
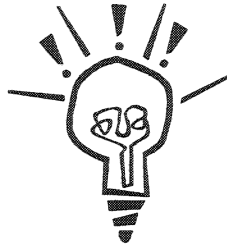
Module Tip:

The community review is needed to identify existing programs, practices, policies and resources. A thorough review outlines community strengths and areas that can be targeted for development. This will be the foundation from which actions will be built and success will be measured.

FAQs:

❑ **Question:** Who should participate in the community review?
Answer: The core group of coalition organizers and anyone who has an interest in being part of the coalition...in other words, anyone and everyone! You may find it easier to work with a group of 10-20 people.

❑ **Question:** How long should the review take?
Answer: That will vary according to the community. It should be done in a timely manner so that people don't lose interest and inhibit progress with coalition building.

❑ **Question:** It seems overwhelming to look at so many different issues. How will the coalition know what to do with the information?
Answer: The information you collect will be used to make future decisions. Actions will need to be prioritized. Subsequent action planning modules will walk you through the steps.

Module Glossary:

Environmental Change: A change in the factors individuals encounter in their every day life that influence the decisions they make.

Action! Directions for completing the Community Review

Complete **each** of the component review form pages following these steps:

1. Place a checkmark to indicate "Strength" for any factors that you identify as existing strengths.

2. Place a checkmark to indicate "Want to Develop" for factors that you want to develop further.

3. Use the "Actions Planned" column to write actions planned to either enhance a strength, or to begin actions to develop an area.

4. Please note that the list of factors given on the form certainly does not provide all possibilities nor are they required factors. List additional factors that you identify under "Other."

5. Use the "Results Demonstrated" column for an ongoing review of your initiative...to check progress and measure success.

Component: Community

Community Factors	Initial Status	Actions Planned	Results Demonstrated Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments
1. Businesses in the community promote healthy work-site choices with things such as healthy vending machine choices, wellness incentives, and wellness opportunities	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
2. Daycare centers are promoting healthy eating and physical activity choices	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
3. Community-based youth organizations and clubs provide age appropriate activities that promote and model healthy eating and physical choices	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
4. There are visible community leaders who model healthy choices, such as senior citizens, coaches, government leaders, school leaders, and church representatives	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
5. There is an active community marketing plan to promote healthy eating and activity choices, including involvement by the media	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress

Community Factors	Initial Status	Actions Planned	Results demonstrated Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments
6. Physical activity opportunities and facilities are easily accessible for all community groups	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date___		☐ In progress
7. Businesses who provide products and services, such as restaurants, fast food business, and supermarkets promote healthy eating	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date___		☐ In progress
8. There are community-based programs that provide opportunities to improve nutrition and physical activity knowledge and skills	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date___		☐ In progress
9. Community-wide events promote and/or provide opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity choices	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date___		☐ In progress
10. The community/school board supports the healthy changes in school through policy, collaboration, repetition, education, support, and reward	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date___		☐ In progress
11. Other (please specify)	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date___		☐ In progress
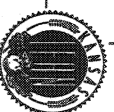
Component: Nutrition Education

Nutrition Education Factors	Initial Status	Actions Planned	Results Demonstrated Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments
12. There is a nutrition education curriculum that incorporates concepts of the Food Guide Pyramid. The curriculum has written outcomes	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress
13. Nutrition education is integrated into core subjects in the classroom. Consider how often integration occurs	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress
14. Nutrition education lessons are fun and participatory, teaching food choice skills along with knowledge	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress
15. Nutrition education lessons are linked to school lunch to create student awareness of healthy choices in their school environment	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress
16. Food tasting is used in the classroom to allow students to experience a variety of foods and develop positive attitudes in a supportive environment	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress
17. When snacks are available in the classroom, they include healthy choices	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress

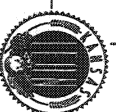| Nutrition Education Factors	Initial Status	Actions Planned	Results demonstrated Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments
18. Parents receive information regarding healthy choices, i.e., letters, newsletters, and surveys, to increase skills, knowledge, and allow feedback	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
19. Parents and community are actively involved in classroom nutrition education, i.e., with interactive homework, field trips, guest speakers, and classroom volunteers	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
20. School staff model personal healthy eating and physical activity choices	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
21. Administration supports the above factors	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
Other (please specify)	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress

Component: Physical Activity

Physical Activity Factors	Initial Status	Actions Planned	Results Demonstrated Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments
22. Opportunities, in addition to physical education classes, exist for physical activity before, during, and after the school day	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date		☐ In progress
23. Physical activity is a daily part of the classroom routine	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date		☐ In progress
24. Physical activity experiences provided are fun, age appropriate, and enhance a student's self-esteem	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date____		☐ In progress
25. The school/community offers a non–competitive environment for physical activity beyond competitive sports programs	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date____		☐ In progress
26. Discipline policies do not include the use of physical activity as punishment	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date		☐ In progress
27. Physical education curricula support the personal development of student behaviors in decision making, goal setting, and personal fitness needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date____		☐ In progress

Physical Activity Factors	Initial Status	Actions Planned	Results demonstrated Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments
28. Physical education curricula provides instruction in lifetime sports and activities	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
29. Physical education classes are scheduled with sufficient time and frequency to meet the above curricula goals	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
30. Active links exist between students and school health partners, i.e. parents, school staff, and community, for physical activity opportunities	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
31. School staff model personal healthy eating and physical activity choices	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
32. Administration supports the above factors	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
Other (please specify)	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress

Component: School Meals

Factors	Initial Status	Actions Planned	Results Demonstrated Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments
33. Students are given adequate time to eat meals in a pleasant, safe environment	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress
34. School meal environment promotes a healthy eating message by using menu choices, bulletin boards, special activities, and music among other things	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress
35. School meal rules discourage philosophies such as "The Clean Plate Club," and the use of food as reward or punishment	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress
36. Student feedback is used to increase satisfaction and participation, by using Nutrition Advisory Committees, or other methods, including taste testing	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress
37. The sale of foods high in fat, sodium, and added sugars on school grounds and as part of fundraising activities is discouraged	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress
38. School meals are coordinated with classroom nutrition education to reinforce learning and increase awareness of healthy eating choices	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date _____		☐ In progress

School Meal Factors	Initial Status	Actions Planned	Results demonstrated Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments
39. Theme days, and special menus are used to increase participation	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
40. School meal choices for reimbursable and ala carte items reflect all federal and state school healthy eating guidelines	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
41. School food service markets the program to students, parents, faculty, administration, and community through a variety of methods, including newsletters and parent meal invitations	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
42. School staff model personal healthy eating and physical activity choices	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
43. Administration supports the above factors	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress
Other (please specify)	☐ Strength ☐ Develop Date_____		☐ In progress